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ACUSOFT JOURNAL



Vol. VI No. 2

Atari Computer User's Society Of Fayetteville

November 1987

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Well gang, here it is November and we are about 35 or so strong as of the latest treasurers report. This is short of the projected 55 or 60 members that we need in order to meet the coming years budget. More on membership later. Right now I want to address the issue of the equipment used to run the club's board. Hmm... it seems as if I've been here before. The equipment used for the board is getting tired, due to use and age. Because of this, the general membership needs to consider upgrading the present system. I know that some of you out there are probably thinking, yea, all we are trying to do is keep up with the changing technology. I can assure you that this is not the case. The major problem is the board is probably the one major benefit that draws club members. If the board is not providing adequate service, people do not renew their membership.

In light of this issue, your presence is requested at the next meeting to discuss possible sale of the club's hardware at existing fair market value, and the use of those proceeds to purchase new equipment for a better BBS. Our main concern is to provide one with a greater capacity for more on line files. The club has the following equipment currently in use on the board: 130 XE computer, Avatex 1200 baud modem, Atari 850 interface, ATR 8000, Sanyo Monitor (green), Atari printer (ST Type), Percom drives (2 DS-DD Atari Smart), and a set of Teac dumb drives. Its your equipment, what happens to it is up to you.

Now for something that I mentioned earlier..... membership. Let's go get 'em!! Yes, go out and recruit NEW MEMBERS! Spread the word now. Surely someone is going to get an Atari for Christmas, so let's let the community know we are out there to help them get the most from their machine. Think about it... Hmm, what can I do for ACUSOFT. There are a lot of Atari users in the Fayetteville area. We just have to go out and find them. Think about it. How did you find out about ACUSOFT? Please, if you have any ideas please give me a call.

Lastly I apologize for the program problems that we had at the last meeting. Look ahead. We hope to have the same show in February. The next time it will work.

Here's wishing all the happiest of Thanksgivings. Remember, Our hearts belong to data!!!!

GEORGE LAROSE

EDITOR'S NOTES

This being my first month as newsletter editor, I must say it has been extremely hectic. After attending a two month school in Alabama, I was looking forward to coming home and being with my family and relaxing. I was also looking forward to starting this new project as Editor, Howard Abner has somehow got me into. You see, we are both in the USAF and he outranks me by 2 pay grades. Never say no to a superior officer? In as much as the work is time consuming, I am glad to help the club with something I have experience at.

While I was at school in Alabama, I took my trusty 65XE and Gemini 10X printer along to accomplish all that enjoyable paperwork. I soon found the computer an absolute necessity for myself as well as those who wanted to borrow it because IBMs, Amigas, and other word processors were too time consuming to learn. Yes, I have definitely sold a few more budding computer enthusiast on "power without the price".

You know, the worst thing that can happen to an Editor is to have his computer go on the blink. The other day I was commenting to my co-workers on how fixing the broken Zenith 248 in our office would cost about as much as 2 or 3 Atari computers like the 65XE I have at my desk. To rub it in, I said they should go out and buy an Atari system like the old 800 I have at home. It has been around forever and without any problem. Well, what goes around comes around. It broke two days later while formatting a disk in Atariwriter Plus. When it rains it ... well you know. I guess I am mentioning this to see if any one has a used eight-bitter they would like to see get some good use and for a good cause also. Beg, borrow, steal, or buy, I am desperate!

On a serious note, the newsletter needs help from all club members. It's a simple fact that without the articles, reviews, letters to, and whatever, the quality of our newsletter suffers. The news and interest items do not need to be long and involved. They just need to be! I am also in need of suggestions on what direction the newsletter may take in the next year with regards to format, style and content. Next time you log on the board, leave me a message before you log off and give all of us some feedback on where we need to go in the next year.

- JOHN GILMORE



CURRENT BUSINESS



CURRENT CONCERNS

At the last board meeting, the idea was discussed whether the club should consider putting our hardware up for sale. At the November general meeting, the idea will be discussed in open forum, and if requested, a vote will take place on this issue. The board members would then establish a fair market price and give all ACUSOFT members first chance at purchasing a little bit of history for their own system. Anyone who is interested or has strong feelings either way, bring your ideas to the November meeting.

There is some concern with how all eight-bit bulletin board users would react to the system being ST based. The caller would need to log on and download eight-bit files in ASCII code as opposed to ATASCII code. This would not affect the programs and files downloaded, only the means to receive them. Suggestions and comments are now being solicited. Please leave a note on the board for general discussion or to the board member of your choice. We will also appreciate any written correspondence. Mail it to our post office box here in Fayetteville.

We are also open to suggestions on how to raise money for the clubs general fund. Some of the ideas so far are a cake sale, a car wash, or maybe a raffle. If you have any good ideas on how to make some quick bucks for ACUSOFT, make it known and bring it up at the next general membership meeting.

MESSAGES TO THE EDITOR

In this column, I would like to address any matters or questions concerning all issues to do with Atari computers and/or ACUSOFT in general. You can leave me a message on the board or send it by mail to our Fayetteville ACUSOFT address. If I can't answer it, one of our board members surely can.

JOHN GILMORE

TRIVIAL PURSUIT

The President of ACUSOFT, George LaRose, will present at the November meeting an eight-bit 50 floppy disk case to the first person who can identify to him what the title ANALOG, from the magazine of the same name, stands for.

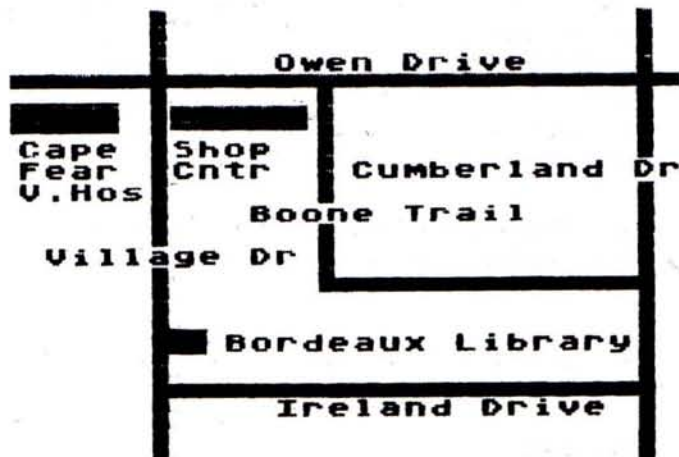
Your newsletter
editor works
HARD!



Give him some
help!

NOVEMBER MEETING

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the November general membership meeting will be held Thursday, the 19th of November at the Bordeaux Branch of the Cumberland County Library. Scheduled school activities will prevent us from using the Terry Sanford High School cafeteria, where our usual monthly meeting are held. There will be discussion of current business, hardware and software demonstrations, and just about any type of conversation to do with Atari computing. Bring your comments, help, advice, problems, or general computer expertise to the meeting. Remember what users groups are for, helping each other.





FOR YOUR INFO...



NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The following is a list of the newsletters we are on an exchange program with. If you are interested in getting on a mailing list, contact me and I will give you the address. If you want to look them over for information or to choose the ones to order the same applies. J6

ACCESS.....Sacramento, CA
 ACE of Salt Lake City.....Salt Lake City, UT
 ACE of San Diego.....San Diego, CA
 ACE of Syracuse.....Syracuse, NY
 Atari Bay Area Computer Users.....San Francisco, CA
 Bay Area Atari Users Group.....Palo Alto, CA
 BRACE.....Ashville, NC
 CABARRUS Atari Users Group.....Concord, NC
 CHAOS.....Lansing, MI
 CIN'TARI.....Cincinnati, OH
 Current Notes.....Dunfries, VA
 GRACE.....Greer, SC
 HACE.....Hickory, NC
 Huntsville Atari Users Group.....Huntsville, AL
 JACS.....Pine Brook, NJ
 LA Atari Computer Enthusiast.....Van Nuys, CA
 Lawrence Atari Computer Club.....Lawrence, KS
 Lowcountry Atari Users Club.....Hanahan, SC
 Midland Atari Computer Club.....Columbia, SC
 MIL@TARI.....West Allis, WI
 Mile High Atari Magazine.....Denver, CO
 NOAUG.....Metairie, LA
 Piedmont Triad Atari Users.....Greensboro, NC
 San Leandro Computer Club.....San Leandro, CA
 SNACC.....Las Vegas, NV
 SUMATARI Computer Users.....Sumter, SC
 TTC News.....Cary, NC
 WAACE.....Dunfries, VA
 Wichita Atari Computer Enthusiast.....Wichita, KS

HELP-LINE

Here is the listing of people who are willing to help you with questions and problems you may have.

John Gilmore, 424-5640, Eves 6-9:30, general questions, word processing, telecommunications, newsletter.

Howard Abner, 484-7060, Eves 6-9:30. Data Perfect, SynCalc, word processing, general questions.

Bill Gardner, 485-2619, Eves 7-10 SynFile, general questions.

GB Johnson, Eves 7-9. DB Man, VIP Professional, Publishing Partner, Flash.

Lyle Law, 864-7347, Eves before 10. BBS, anything!

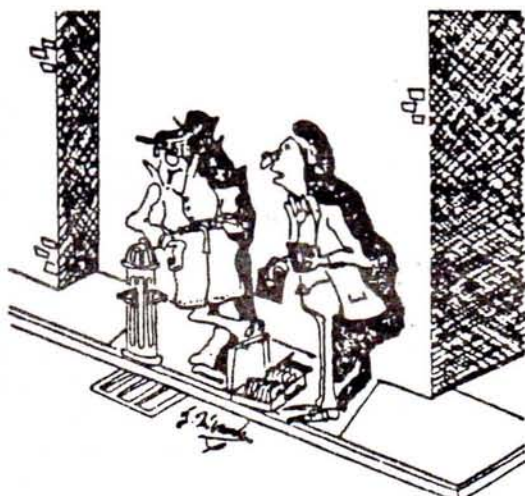
Sam Carter, 425-5180, Eves 7-10. Deep Blue-C.

Ed Devenish, 567-6140, Eves 8-12, Anything for eight-bit.

Kenneth Boggs, 425-7299, Aft/Eves 3:30-10:30. Any ST questions.

Jeff Heinen, 432-9423/3085, anytime. ST Flight Sim, any ST questions

We would like your name and phone number in the newsletter help-line. You don't have to be a computer wiz, just be willing to help people with the problems they may have. Help can be on Games, Languages, Spreadsheets, Hardware, Graphics, Music, Repair, or ANYTHING!!!! You can sign up as an expert in an area, or just a specific program. If you can be of assistance, call me (John), or leave a message on the BBS. Remember how it was when you were looking for help. THIS IS WHAT USER GROUPS ARE ALL ABOUT-HELPING EACH OTHER!!!!



Are you sure they're in the public domain?

BUY, SELL OR TRADE

Members are allowed to bring software (originals only) and hardware to sell or trade at the monthly meetings. This is a non-commercial service for members only. Dealers may not participate. Individuals may make whatever deals they want, but no money may be allowed to exchange hands on school property. You will be allowed to display your merchandise before and after the regular meeting.



EIGHT-BIT NEWS



THE XE GAME MACHINE

Commentary By
John A. Gilmore

Being an Atari eight-bit user myself, I sometimes wonder what will the future hold in the way of support for my old but reliable system. It seems that I have found myself in this position many times in my life but I must say I have always found progress to be my friend.

They say that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but here I go again seeing some old dog do new tricks.

My sons asked me if they could have an un-tee-ump type of game machine to shoot, kill and who knows what the aliens from zid, and that I should ask Santa to bring them one this year. I thought to myself, what ever happen to the old Atari 2600 game machine we bought for \$150.00 back in 1983. Well, it's all grown up and can be found in the toy stores this season.

For an exercise in futility, I decided to argue the point with my sons on how the current Atari systems we have in the house can do all of these things, and when I talk now into letting me get that ST I've been wanting for so long, one of them can be theirs. To make a long story short, these new un-tee-ump super game machines have a little more kid appeal than the old 800 or other eight-bit you or I may have lying around the house.

The plot thickens, right? With the release of the XE game machine, Atari may have married the best of both worlds when it comes to entertainment and computing, and truly have reinforced the point "power without the price".

I can now see the XE game machine being purchased as an entertainment device, and depending on the level of interest, being upgraded to a full blown eight-bit system capable of satisfying those personal needs a family may have in the areas of word processing, finance, record keeping, and all the other things home computers are used for. There is surely enough software to go around, and even though it does not come as fast as we want, eight-bit programs are still being developed and are amazingly useful and powerful.

If you are in the market for some kind of video game machine this holiday season, my advice is to invest in the Atari XE game machine. Not only will it satisfy the "Top Gun" fever in all of us, but with an add-on keyboard, disk drive and some help from your ACUSOFT friends, maybe even the kids can be on line and computing in no time.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!



"Friendly no, but it is user tolerant."

ATARI SX212 MODEM

For anyone that is into on line computing, and the long lonely nights of just you and the latest BBS from somewhere far across the country, Atari has a new modem that is compatible with both the eight-bit and sixteen-bit computers.

The Atari SX212 modem has an RS-232 interface and an SIO connector for the eight-bitters, but when it comes to the eight-bit machines there are some reports that it still has some minor bugs. Bob Woolley says that it did not work with his 850 interface and the status command to every address on the SIO buss got no response from the SX. In a nutshell, Mr. Woolley concludes the SX212 needs a handler for eight-bit use. So, an SIO cable, and a version of Express will be available from Atari at some future date.

It is the ability to connect the modem to your system without the need for an expensive interface that will save the eight-bit user as much as the cost of the modem itself. It is agreed by all that this minor bug is most discouraging aspect of Atari's new modem.

For the modem itself, the reviews say that overall it worked fine. Xmodem downloads....no problem. It is even reported that the modem does not lose the carrier with excessive noise and voice interrupts.

The manual states that the modem cannot be used with the cassette recorder on an 800XL. This should apply to all eight-bits due to grounding of the motor line fed into the modem. Even though the manual suggest the modem can be placed on top of the disk drive and the telephone on top of it, a better place is to put the disk drive on top of the modem to leave the drive vent clear for cooling.

As an overall assessment of the modem.... it is a good value for the price, works under less than perfect conditions, and can be used on the sixteen-bit systems as well as the eight-bit systems with little prior knowledge. With the release of the software from Atari to solve the handler problem, experienced users and new beginners will be able to enjoy on line computing for a real bargain. J6

EIGHT-BIT UPGRADES

If you are interested in upgrading your eight-bit Atari to compete with all those mega-ram sixteen-bit machines, well I've got news for you. It can't be done. Although this may not come as a shock to you, there are some alternatives you might consider.

There are a number of different types of memory upgrades for Atari eight-bit computers with various degrees of difficulty of installation. If you are thinking of memory upgrades, now is the time due to import trade regulations.

The most common use of a memory expander is for use as a ramdisk or electronic hard drive, if you will. It has both the memory space needed for large applications and also the speed that makes manipulating of files so time effective. Unfortunately the contents of the ramdisk must be downloaded to floppy disk prior to switching off the computer. The ramdisk loses its memory just like the ram in your eight-bit computer.

Here are a few of the upgrade packages available for use in the Atari eight-bit arena.

AXLON- this upgrade is for the 800 and is in the form of a plug in cartridge and comes in different memory sizes. These tend to be a little more expensive than the rest.

800 PLUS 288 UPGRADE- this upgrade cost about \$30.00 in parts but it will take 3 and one half hours for the experienced solder user.

THE RAMASTER- this upgrade is used on the XL series and will cost about \$50.00 with the memory. For more information call ABC Consulting (313)-261-7609.

THE RAMBO XL- this product is made by ICD and most of their products are of good quality. It is even compatible with the old 1200XL. The price is \$39.95 retail.

THE RANCHARGER- the advantage of this upgrade is no computer modification is needed since it plugs into the cartridge slot of the 800. There are different memory sizes that start at \$150.00 for 256k, and included is a copy of Mydos.

THE 320,576, AND 1088K 130XE- These upgrades are explained by Scott Peterson in various publications. First you must have experience at soldering, and the larger the upgrade the more involved it becomes.

For most of the upgrades, SPARTADOS is considered the best. If you require more information on the upgrades leave a note on the board and names and numbers will mysteriously appear....



NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

I was going to mention this in my editorial section, but I thought what an appropriate place to talk about how I produced my first newsletter, but the eight-bit news.

The wordprocessor is the famous Atariwriter Plus with the icons and titles for all the pages produced with Print Shop and Print Shop Companion. The map was drawn by using Page Designer saved and dumped to the printer in one quarter size with Megafont. Of course the cartoons and illustrations were reproduced on a copy machine.

The hardware I used was an Atari 800 (which is now broke), an Atari 800XL (which replaced the broken 800 thanks to George LaRose) and an Atari 65XE (which I have on my desk at work). The drives are 1050's and the printer is a Gemini 10X interfaced with an Atari 850. All downloads from the ACUSOFT and SOLDIER CITY BBSs were done by an Avatex 1200 Baud modem with Express 850 as the software.

Anyone having suggestion on how to further use eight-bit applications for the newsletter, or those who have other interesting programs or ideas please feel free to drop me a line. Remember it is your newsletter first.





MEGA TRENDS

Commentary By
John A. Gilmore

If you didn't know already....THE MEGAS ARE COMING!!! THE MEGAS ARE COMING!!!

In November's Current Notes, it is reported the Mega ST's have hit the West coast, and Atari is looking for proper "qualified dealer reps" to be "upscale" Atari dealers? Whatever that means. Maybe that means certain types are not able to sell or make the sale of these super computers. Well any way they are here.

It is also reported in the Michigan Atari Magazine that the Mega's have hit Florida. The ones reviewed are the 4 meg models with the multiple T-1000-10s (1 megabyte chips), a blitter chip, a battery backup clock, and other sockets and pins for interfaces with SDI or who knows what.

In the Michigan review, timing tests found the graphics to move twice as fast with the blitter chip turned on. This on/off function can be accessed via the mouse. After further investigation, it was thought that the blitter chip was a flat pack IC. Now, for all the electronic hackers, how can this be mounted into all the present 520/1040s?

Speaking of the mouse, it is attached to the keyboard because the CPU that reads the keys also reads the mouse. The keyboard itself is thinner and attached to the main unit by a coiled phone cable. Overall it is considered much better than the 1040 keyboard. So I ask, what is better than the 1040? The Mega? Who am I to blow against the wind?

Well, let's blow against the wind. Ok, I'll try not to blow too hard. "Power without the price" is the personal motto I live by. When I heard the pricing on the Mega models, I found I could't even go into debt on my best charge card. (something I do when some new computer widget comes within 1 or 2 continents) That to me is another world.... Agree or not, here is the dirty laundry. The Color ST4 is a mere \$2800.00. But don't get discouraged the mono version is only a small \$2600.00.

I will now let the wind die down. It is obvious that the Mega STs and the new laser printer is to be Atari's current answer to desk top publishing. It has the memory for any publishing project imaginable, and the laser printer will water the eyes of any ink and press typesetter, of which I was some years ago. In fact, I will now solicit those in the club to join me in the first annual ACUSOFT BBS-a-thon to raise money for me to publish future newsletters in the style we should grow accustomed to. No? Well, I figured I would try.

Anyway, here are the Gee-Wiz numbers and some pictures for your look-see. More Mega trends next month.

MEGA ST COMPUTER

Computer

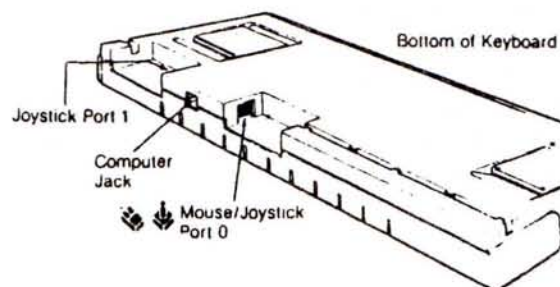
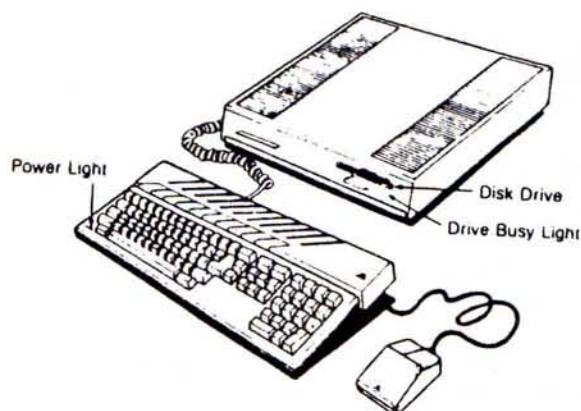
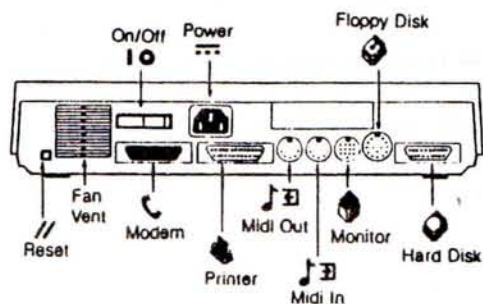
Processor MC68000, 32-bit internal, 16-bit external architecture; 24-bit address bus; 8 MHz frequency

Memory:

MEGA ST1™	1 megabyte (1,048,576 bytes) of RAM; 192 kilobytes (196,608 bytes) of ROM
MEGA ST2™	2 megabytes (2,097,152 bytes) of RAM; 192 kilobytes (196,608 bytes) of ROM
MEGA ST4™	4 megabytes (4,194,304 bytes) of RAM; 192 kilobytes (196,608 bytes) of ROM

The Computer's Back Panel

Many types of external devices, called peripherals, can be attached to the back panel of your MEGA ST Computer



MAGIC SAC COMPATIBILITY

Here is a list of software that is reported in the November Current Notes to work with the Magic Sac-Macintosh emulator. If you would like to look at the complete listing of all that do and don't, contact me or leave a note on the board. J6

Acta.....	1.0
Battery Pack.....	---
Calculator Construction Set.....	1.0
ColorPrint.....	2.03
ComicWorks.....	1.0
Cricket Graph.....	1.1
Deja Vu.....	---
Design Scope.....	1.0
Dinner at Eight.....	---
Disk Express.....	1.06
DMAC II.....	1.07
Dollars and Sense.....	1.4
Excel.....	1.0
Fact Finder.....	---
Filemaker Plus.....	2.0
Fotographer.....	1.5
Fontastic.....	2.6
Full Paint.....	1.0
Graphic Works.....	1.0
General Ledger.....	1.1
Home Accountant.....	1.3
Logic Works.....	1.3
MAC3D.....	1.1r
Mac 68000 Development System.....	---
MacBlob.....	---
MacCad PCB Designer.....	1.3
MacCoach.....	---
MacDraft.....	1.1
Macintax.....	1.2a
MacLightning.....	2.0
MacMoney.....	2.03
MacPainting MacPerspective.....	3.01
MacPlaymate.....	---
MacPlot.....	1.5
MacProject.....	1.2
MacSpell+.....	---
Mac the Knife Volumes 1 & 2.....	---
MacTools.....	6.3
MacWrite.....	4.6
MacZap.....	4.5
Mastertype III.....	---
Mazewars+.....	1.1
Mega-Merge.....	2.1
MindWrite.....	1.0
MS Basic.....	---
MS Chart.....	1.0
MS File.....	1.0
MS Word.....	3.0
MS Works.....	1.0
Multiplan.....	1.02
NFL Challenge.....	---
ODS/Consultant.....	1.6
Orbitor.....	---
OverVUE.....	2.0a

Phoenix3D.....	1.0
PowerPoint.....	1.0
Print Shop.....	1.0
Professional Composer.....	2.0
Profit Stalker II.....	1.2
ProPrint.....	---
Ready Set Go.....	4.0
Reflex.....	1.01
Sidekick.....	1.10b
Silicon Press.....	1.1
Spellwell.....	1.2d
Statview 512+.....	1.0
Stella.....	1.3
Stepping Out.....	---
SuperPaint.....	1.0
Tempo.....	1.2
Thinktank 512.....	1.30
Thunder.....	1.01
TK Solver.....	1.5r
Turbocharger.....	2.0d
Turbo Pascal.....	1.00a
Typing Tutor III.....	1.5
Uninvited.....	---
Write Now.....	1.0
Zork I.....	---

Z-Time Internal Clock/Calendar

A Review by
Fred B. Deen, III

One of the first hardware add-ons I wanted to get for my brand new 1040ST was a Clock/Calendar. After reading some reviews and talking to some of the mail-order people, I decided on Terrific Peripherals' Z-Time. I ordered it from MicroType Computers who had the best price of \$41.00. A couple of days later, my package arrived. It comes in a nice little book-type folding plastic box, something like the 8-bit Spy vs. Spy comes in. Inside were a large fold-out pictorial instruction page, a cable assembly, the Z-Time chip itself, a warranty card, and the initial start-up instructions and software.

Installation is quite simple. Depending on which mother board you have. Either use the cable assembly or just piggy-back your ROM chip on top of the Z-Time. However, remember if you are not experienced working with sensitive semiconductors, you should leave this operation to someone who is. Also, opening your ST will void your warranty!

Initial start-up is even easier. Simply run the program that "wakes up" the 10 year Lithium battery inside the clock and copy Z-TIME.ACC to the root directory of your boot disks. A clock will appear on start-up in the upper right-hand corner of the desktop. You may toggle the display on and off by clicking on Z-TIME from the FILE menu.

In addition the the clock display, you have, of course, automatic time/date stamping of all your files.

I believe that the Z-Time clock is a very good investment in your ST and I highly recommend it to all ST owners.

ACUSOFT

The Atari Computer User's Society Of Fayetteville (ACUSOFT) is an independent computer user's club and is not affiliated in any way with Atari Inc. The sole purpose of the club is to develop and share the computer knowledge of the members. Piracy of software will not be tolerated by the club or fostered in any way.

Membership dues are \$24 per year. Payment of dues entitles the member: to attend meetings, to vote, to receive each issue of the newsletter, and to utilize the club library and bulletin board. Each resident in the household of a member is considered an associate member. Associate members are entitled to the same privileges as a regular member, but will not be eligible to vote. Only one newsletter will be sent to each household.

Other Atari user's groups will receive a copy of the newsletter without charge if a copy of their own is sent in return. Such groups may extract any portion of the ACUSOFT Journal for their own use, providing acknowledgement of the source and author is made.

Advertising space is available. Please write ACUSOFT, P.O. Box 1117, Fayetteville, N.C. 28302 for further details.

Officers and committee chairman are:

President:	George LaRose	868-2483/6690	Vice-president:	Bill Gardner	485-2619
Secretary:	Ed Devenish	567-6140	Treasurer:	Howard Abner	484-7060
Newsletter Editor:	John Gilmore	425-5640	Librarian-8 bit:	Lyle Law	425-7957
Librarian-ST:	Pat Fischer	822-5053	Program Chairman:	Bill Schanahan	868-6654
Sys-Op (BBS):	Lyle Law	868-3606			



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